

Remarks

Claims 6, 8, 19, 21, 28 and 30 have been amended, claims 16-18, 22 and 25-27 have been canceled, and new claims 31 and 32 have been added. Review and reconsideration in light of the amendment and the remarks below are respectfully requested.

Claims 2-13, 16-19 and 21-30 are rejected as defining obvious subject matter over U.S. Pat. No. 2,563,120 to Klingens et al. in view of U.S. Pat. No. 881,743 to Thomson and U.S. Pat. No. 5,389,045 to Lyons. Accordingly, each of independent claims 19, 21, 28 and 30 have been amended to specify that when the belt is tightened to the predetermined tension, the lock nut (or locking member) and the adjustment nut (or member) are positioned so that movement of the threaded rod is prevented and the spacer is rigidly trapped between the adjustment nut and the anchor component.

In contrast, the spacer 70 of the Lyons reference includes a pair of telescoping sleeves 80, 86. As noted at column 3, lines 64 - column 4, line 13 of that reference, the sleeves 80, 86 are designed such that the nut 74 is tightened along the threaded rod 52, 60 until the end 102 of sleeve 80 overlaps groove 92 of sleeve 86. Thus the system of the Lyons reference requires a user to visually inspect the spacer 70 to ensure that it is in the proper configuration and that the tension force is at the desired level. Moreover, as shown in Fig. 4 of the Lyons reference, the rod 52, 60 is intended to be able to move at all times, including while the system is tensioned. Thus, the Lyons spacer 70 is not rigidly trapped between the adjustment nut 74 and the anchor component 58, 64 of that reference when the belt is tightened to the predetermined tension. The Lyons reference teaches against tightening the nut 74 until the end 96 of sleeve 86 would bottom out on the plate member 84. However, even if the Lyons device were tightened in such a manner the system would not prevent movement of the rod 52, 60, which could always move to the left (relative to the view of Lyons in Fig. 4).

In view of the above, it is clear that the combination of Klingens, Thomson and Lyons does not result in the inventions as defined in respective claims 19, 21, 28 and 30. Specifically, combining the spacer of Lyons with the tensioner of Thomson to tension the

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slicer belt of Klingens would result in a slicer belt tensioning system in which the Thomson tension system rod 23 could move in either direction relative to the stationary cross-bar 24, because the combination would not include a lock nut (or locking member) and because the end 96 of the Lyons sleeve 86 would not be bottomed out on the cross-bar 24. Moreover, even if the Lyons nut 74 were tightened so that the end 96 of the sleeve 86 was bottomed out on the Thomson cross-bar 24, there would be no lock nut (or locking member) to prevent the Thompson rod 23 from moving in a direction so that the end 96 of the Lyons sleeve 86 would move away from the cross-bar 24. Thus, even the combination of Klingens, Thomson and Lyons fails to provide the inventions defined by any one of respective claims 19, 21, 28 and 30 as amended because the combination lacks the lock nut (or locking member) and the resulting tensioner system rod would be capable of movement.

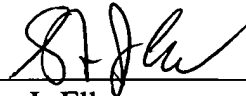
New independent claim 31 specifies that the “said first locking member and said spacer interact with said rod and said stationary anchor component to prevent movement of said rod toward a second side of said stationary anchor component, wherein said second locking member interacts with said rod and said stationary anchor component to prevent movement of said rod toward said first side of said stationary anchor component, and wherein said spring is in a compressed and stationary state between said first locking member and said stationary anchor component.” Thus, the belt tensioning system of claim 31 specifies that the movement of the rod is prevented in two directions. In contrast, as noted above, even if the Klingens, Thomson and Lyons references were to be combined, the belt tensioning system would not prevent movement of the rod in two directions.

Accordingly, it is submitted that the application is in a condition for allowance and a formal notice thereof is respectfully solicited.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees required, including the fee for an extension of time, or to credit any overpayment to Deposit Account 20-0809.

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. J. Elleman', is written over a horizontal line.

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